

THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

VOLUME V

JUNE 1928

No. 6

BOOKS FOR ADOLESCENTS¹

SIRI ANDREWS

Children's Department, Brooklyn Public Library

THE PROBLEM of books for boys and girls in their 'teens is one of the big unsolved problems of the public library. The policy of the library with regard to books for younger children and books for adults is pretty well formulated and the work organized, but except in a very few libraries there is no department for adolescents, no well defined policy either as to the place of these young people in the library nor as to collections of books meant especially for their use. Boys and girls in their 'teens are taken care of in the children's department or in the adult department, but they are neither children nor adults. They need stronger and more varied meat than the children's room offers, and yet without guidance they are overwhelmed and bewildered by the number and diversity of the books in the adult department.

It goes without saying that boys and girls in their 'teens need as much guidance in their reading as younger children, perhaps even more, and almost certainly more than adults, who are now getting so much attention.

Boys and girls of this age are among the most interesting and lovable of all the users of a public library. Their growing curiosity is a constant challenge to their elders, threatened by mental lassitude. Their questioning of standards long held up to them as ideals induces one to clarify one's own thoughts. Their defensive egoism and noisy gregariousness are at once aggravating and

amusing. Their physical energy and restlessness can be both wearing and refreshing. Their wistful sensitiveness asks wordlessly for silent understanding and help in the maze of new feelings and thoughts and experiences.

They are a real test of our intuition, our tact, our knowledge of living people and of books themselves. They are keenly alive, reaching out, albeit gropingly, to new worlds both mental and spiritual. They want guidance, but are too shy and secretive about their new thoughts, too diffident about producing these inner interests for public inspection, to confess their doubts and misgiving, and to ask for advice. Their elders must know and understand these things without being told, and unobtrusively put the right books in their way, nor be annoyed at unexpected results, or interest in books distinctly not recommended!

"Recommended" has an ominous sound. It is not so much our place to refuse certain books to these children as to put certain other better, and often less well known books in their way. Inspirational and suggestive is May L. Becker's *ADVENTURES IN READING*. Here is a book that makes one feel the joy to be had in reading, that does not preach, and that arouses a desire to read in many different directions. It stresses the more recent and unusual books of high quality, as well as the older standards, and avoids mention of such titles as are obviously already popular. There is no need, by the way, to

¹ Editor's Note: This article is published to aid teachers who are confronted with the problem of providing reading matter for children mature in experience, and in mental outlook.

refuse boys and girls books of a very popular type, for the fact that they are so popular is proof that they answer certain needs of these young people, and should not be denied them. Experimenting youth must taste of everything, enjoy the book of the day with his contemporaries, according to the standards of his contemporaries! But these books do not need further advertising, and to us may come the privilege of introducing to an expanding mind, a new book, a new world.

The books that seem to be the best beloved by these older children can tell us much about their interests. The vivid and galloping adventure stories are a vicarious outlet for their energy. The rather monotonous similarity of plot and the lack of literary merit are not drawbacks to enjoyment. Moving love stories and other tales of a sentimental cast appeal to the emotions now rising uppermost.

Books of adventure there should be in plenty. Except for *PRESTER JOHN*, which is widely recommended on school lists, John Buchan's books are not well known. The boys should have *JOHN MACNAB* and the others too. Le Gallienne's *PIECES OF EIGHT*, a thrilling and well told tale of a hunt for treasure in the Bahamas, merits a wider reading. Lesterman's *ADVENTURES OF A TRAFALGAR LAD* and Rogers' *DRAKE'S QUEST* are more recent books of sea life several centuries ago, one hardly less gripping than the other. Another recent story on popular adventure tale lines, with a welcome change of setting, is Harper's *SIBERIAN GOLD*.

Boys who have enjoyed the books about David Putnam's voyages, should find delight in a book by the beloved "Captain Bob" himself. In *NORTHWARD HO!* Bartlett tells of his share in Stefansson's 1913-1916 Arctic Expedition and makes fascinating reading of it.

That these youths have not outgrown their earlier interest in cowboys is evident in their constant demands for certain writers of "western stories." Rollins' *JINGLEBOB*, a chronicle of real cowboys of the 1880's, makes excellent reading of this type.

This is a hero worshipping age; and we do not always remember that not all heroes are dead. We stress books about the nobility and courage of men of the past, but boys and girls should also realize that brave deeds are still being done, noble men still live, and some worth while things remain to be done. Lindbergh's *WE* is at present the most popular answer to that. And surely Thomas' *BOYS' LIFE OF COL. LAWRENCE* is a romantic hero story for modern boys. Bridges' *HEROES OF MODERN ADVENTURE* tells absorbing tales of modern exploration and hazardous undertakings that make one realize that there are still endless possibilities for adventure even in this day.

But explorers and adventurers are not the only heroes, and de Kruif's *MICROBE HUNTERS* stresses the heroism of scientists in so popular and easy and readable a style that boys read it with interest and find new vistas opening before them. Akeley's *IN BRIGHTEST AFRICA* opens up still another field of thought and action.

These objective books of adventure serve also to counteract the more subjective and introspective tendencies of this age. Too much probing and self-analysis, which may develop as a result of the growing moral activity, may become a morbid concentration on self. Adolescents need books of action which ignore these problems, and they need books of humor which make light of them.

Humor may be a restorer of perspective and proportion when life seems too hard and real, and also when it seems too fantastic and unreal. The number of good humorous stories is smaller than one would wish, but such writers as Wodehouse, Lardner, Leacock, Benchley are invaluable for that freshness which renders ordinary affairs less obvious and prosaic than the average person is apt to find them. E. V. Lucas, Christopher Morley, Agnes Repplier have charming and readable essays that relieve the tenseness of too strong emotion, and though there will hardly be a clamorous demand for essays, however delightful, these volumes should have a place in whatever browsing corner is allotted to these young people.

At the same time, the growing thoughtfulness and seriousness of these boys and girls should not be discouraged or allowed to go quite unnourished and uncared for. They are questioning standards they have hitherto accepted. It is now neither a wise nor a profitable thing to be dogmatic. Give them instead a great variety of books presenting a variety of points of view, and let the youngsters contemplate contradictory ways of thought, and gradually orient themselves. Since fiction is more potent in reaching the emotions than books of philosophy and ethics, such books as Forster's *A PASSAGE TO INDIA* may be invaluable in presenting divergent points of view with detachment and without partisanship.

The idealism of these young people, their wistful desire for perfection, must not be neglected nor forgotten. Their more aggressive qualities are so much more obvious that one is apt to forget or to doubt the existence of any great sensitiveness. Books like Cabot's *WHAT MEN LIVE BY* may help answer this longing for perfection, for guidance. And fiction such as Bordeaux's *THE FEAR OF LIVING* may prove to be quietly strengthening. Idealistic and idyllic stories, told in beautiful English, appealing and exquisite in tone are scarce, but worth seeking out and suggesting to those who have sufficient reading background to read them with enjoyment. Robert Nathan's *FIDDLER IN BARLY* and Wood-Cutter's *HOUSE* are rare idylls; Hudson's *ABBE PIERRE* is a charming romantic love story of southern France, and Hamsun's *VICTORIA OF NORWAY*; Marshall's *WATERMEADS*,

a quiet story with an English setting. Stories of this type, and Stephens' *MARY, MARY*, Barrie, and Bjornsen will help answer the girls' desire for love stories. They do not picture a life which is really complex and chaotic as too simple and unreal, nor do they put all the emphasis on those phases of love which are of lesser importance as compared to the beauty and spiritual significance of love. These, and such fantasies as De la Mare's *THREE MULLA-MULGARS* counteract the influence of the very modern and very realistic stories which the children are bound to read and which of course they ought to have if they are to live in a modern world and meet its modern problems.

The strong liking for poetry among adolescents will welcome the delightfully readable history of poetry and poetic forms, called *THE WINGED HORSE* and made by the young poets, Joseph Auslander and F. E. Hill. Two long poems that will appeal to high school boys and girls because of their beauty of expression as well as the romance of their subject matter, are Millay's *THE KING'S HENCHMAN* and Robinson's *TRISTRAM*.

To build a varied collection of books for boys and girls in their 'teens which shall have neither too many books of the "required reading" kind nor of the popular best sellers type, nor of the cynical, sophisticated, minutely analytical and introspective sort that are patently for more mature minds, is one of the most pressing problems of the public library, and one which needs long and careful study and experimentation.

GREAT POSSESSIONS

CLARISSA MURDOCH

Detroit, Michigan

Months and days I've wasted
Doing some useless thing,—
How few the hours that have been well spent,
Viewing the flowers in Spring!
—Fuijiwara no Okikazu (900 A. D.)

AS A FAMILY we are enthusiast'c about outdoor life and when spring comes we like to go adventuring, on foot, by row-boat, or by automobile. Several years ago we joined the vast throng of American gypsies that fills our highways each summer. After a dark winter, fresh air and plenty of sunshine were ordered for the children. The cheapest way to get both seemed to be to camp. The girls were small enough to sleep in the car and we got cots over which we pitched a tent fastened to the automobile. To pack tent, cots, blankets, pillows, and suitcases took clever engineering. We don't cook because there simply isn't room for dishes. However, we do carry a thermos bottle or two and sometimes get coffee, rolls, and berries when we are tired of the greasy food of small town restaurants. Sometimes we run away from town for a week-end; again we may camp for weeks; each summer we take several trips, as the whim seizes us. It is such fun setting off in the early morning, knowing that some exciting adventure—that is, exciting to us—is awaiting us beyond the bend of a road.

March usually begins the year, for then we hunt pussy willows. One red letter week-end we drove to Tawas for arbutus. Northern Michigan means lady's slippers, both yellow and the pink and white showy. From the Adirondacks we carried a picture of a meadow of bluets, blue or white, enamel-like blossoms. Last year's trip added to our list of flowers the beautiful passion flower, "May-pop," state flower of North Carolina. On the slopes of the heavily wooded Smokies we have seen acres of rhododendrons with their

pink and white blossoms. One of our most interesting days was spent in the Monroe marshes where we went in search of the American lotus. A bog in New Hampshire gleamed with masses of snowy wild callas. Each year in August we scan the swamps and wet ditches for the glowing torches of the cardinal flower. Hundreds of red-bud trees and dog-wood bushes were the gift of the South on our last trip. The utterly lovely fragrant yellow and white honey-suckles found everywhere in the South answered our unspoken question, "Why do so many poets write of the honey-suckle?"

As we recall each "find" we feel that we have "the safe kept memory of a lovely thing." Looking out of the tent when camping in an apple orchard one sees "a heaven full of stars" and exclaims, with Sara Teasdale, "I am honored to be witness of so much majesty."

But on these trips we have gained more than beautiful pictures. We have learned much of geography, history, and people. George Bernard Shaw, in writing recently to a young student, told him that travel was the best way of getting an education—travel preferably on foot. Next best to traveling afoot is to go in a car and camp.

A friend suggested two years ago that since we could not go abroad it would be interesting to drive to Quebec and see France in America. We wondered if our long neglected French would enable us to ask directions and read road signs. Deciding to try it, we discovered as we drove along that we did remember a few words and we also found that when necessity arises even Anglo-Saxons have

a gift of pantomime. If we thought we had lost the road we would call to a passerby, "Quebec?" and point. It served very well in the country but sometimes in the towns we were overwhelmed by the rapid torrent of French and had to make our turns block by block, then stop and again call, "Quebec?" The children soon learned that the sign "Salon de la creme à la glace" meant a place where they could buy ice cream cones, and that at the Bureau de Poste they could mail their post-cards.

Twice we were lucky enough to breakfast in the homes of habitants. One had a kitchen panelled in mellow yellow pine, a room sunny and immaculately clean. As we ate our crusty French bread we carried on a funny conversation with our animated hostess. Noticing our license she said, "Michigan?" "Oui," we replied, "Detroit." Her face fairly beamed and she exclaimed, "Mon enfant est en Detroit, Americaine Avenue." Then we made a guess and asked, "Henry Ford's?" "Oui, oui," came the response and we all felt like old friends.

Quebec is a land of little villages scattered along the roadside like beads loosely strung on a string. A large stone church dominates each hamlet. Sometimes we saw several spires at a time. We noticed roadside shrines everywhere—one, a tiny one in a covered bridge. Bells and chimes ring at all hours. There are narrow "ribbon" farms, long horned cattle, two-wheeled carts. We saw a few thatched roofs. Having read "Dog of Flanders," the girls were thrilled to see a dog hitched to a small milk cart full of cans. The cottages, often of stone, with a chimney at the end, are close to the road. The windows are uniformly curtained in filet lace, work of the women. We were surprised to see so few flowers in the yards. There are trees and potted plants, but no riotous flower gardens. The porches are ornamented with iron grill-work railings, and on each porch is a long wooden bench. On Sunday we saw the women, dressed in long black dresses, black stockings, and face veils, walking along with their men who were also in "blacks."

Everywhere we were received with smiles

and great courtesy, the children waving gayly at us as we passed. Apparently the French habitant is a friendly person.

George Bouchard, who lives among these people and represents them in Parliament has written successfully about their life. His book, *OTHER DAYS, OTHER WAYS* is just published. The wood cuts add to its charm.

Driving back through New England the pages of American history were open before us. Cape Cod fascinated us with its fine beaches, coves, mysteriously beautiful dunes, old wind-mills, cranberry bogs, and early American houses. The Cape's little cottages are charming—unpainted gray or white with green shutters. They have one story, broad roofs, a central chimney, doorways with fan lights over head. It is because of their simplicity, perfect proportions, and fitness to their background that they are so lovely. Here are snowy ruffled curtains at the windows, front yards with picket fences, and masses of gay blooms. I never saw such color in gardens as in those of Cape Cod. Hollyhocks, poppies, zinnias, roses and other old-fashioned posies seem to thrive in the salt air.

Arriving in Provincetown at dusk, we again had the feeling that we were in a foreign land, for the quaint, narrow street was filled with Portuguese boys, dressed in white sailor suits, walking along with their girls. Their swarthy beauty, as they laughed and chattered, made them a picturesque sight.

For several years we had been specializing a bit in Eastern mountains. The Adirondacks, the Green, the White, the Berkshires, the Alleghanies. There remained the Kentucky hills, the Blue Ridge, and the Smokies. For months we had been longing to visit them. We wanted to see the rhododendron "hells," log cabins, mountaineers, mountain schools, blue "kivers," weaving, and razor-back pigs. Ever since at a tender age I read "Two Little Confederates" I had longed to see a "razor-back." This trip far exceeded our expectations. We journeyed to these mountains in the time of horse-chestnut blooms and the trees in the distance looked like huge bouquets. The gorgeous rhododendron blos-

(Continued on page 190)

THE TEACHERS COLLEGE LIBRARY AND THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

MILDRED BATCHELDER

State Teachers College, St. Cloud, Minnesota

LIKE A REFRAIN there goes running through my mind, over and over again—"the right book for the right child at the right time"—and after I have listened to it awhile, I stop rather suddenly thinking—"and who is to bring about this situation?"

Libraries in our country reach about one half of the people, we are told. The children in this number are, some of them, fortunate enough to have a special children's room or school library from which they may borrow the best books and where they will find sympathy and understanding and a librarian who is truly interested in helping them get acquainted with and enjoy books. But many children, even though they are within the districts served by libraries, still do not have the very best children's books for their use and are free to read or not, as they will, with little guidance. The children in the other group who are outside the territory served by libraries are dependent for their books and for help in learning to read and in finding pleasure in reading upon their parents and friends, and upon their teachers in school. It is repeating the obvious to say that these or any boys and girls must acquire an established and discriminating reading habit during their school years if they are to further their book education beyond that of their life in school and if they are to appreciate one of the most satisfying and pleasurable uses of leisure time. They must, during their stay at school, learn to know how to find their way about in books and in libraries and gain the desire to enrich their lives and their experience by reading.

Because the school reaches a large number of boys and girls who are not within the realms of libraries it is especially important that teachers be prepared to give boys and girls the best possible introduction to reading and to practical knowledge of what books can give. To do this, teachers must themselves

understand what should be expected from the elementary school library and how it should function in relation to the entire school. For some time, teachers colleges have recognized the place of the library in giving this attitude and background and have attempted to meet the situation in various ways. In the State Teachers College at St. Cloud, Minnesota, the library has made some preliminary steps toward this end.

It is necessary to understand that in Minnesota the state encourages the establishment of libraries in all its schools. A satisfactory library in a school makes that school rank higher in the eyes of the Education Department of the state. In addition the Library Division of this department is in close touch with school libraries and exercises supervisory powers over them, because of the state aid which is allowed to libraries buying books from the approved state list. This means that with such good state co-operation school libraries may become very effective if the people who go out into the schools understand how best to use them.

At St. Cloud Teachers College the Children's Literature course is taught by members of the college faculty and is closely related to the library at every point. It is one quarter in length, four hours a week, and is required of all juniors. Since this is a junior course the students have the work before doing their student teaching which is a distinct advantage. Thus whatever they learn in this course is immediately of practical value to them in their student teaching. During the last quarter, six of the class hours are spent in the children's room of the Library as supervised study or laboratory periods. The preparation of practically every lesson requires extensive use of the library and as many books as possible are examined. Mimeographed lists of various types of children's books are made in co-

operation with the library. Any such lists are compiled with special reference to the Elementary School Library List for Minnesota. Students are familiarized with this and with the help which they may receive from the state. When these classes are covering certain phases of their work, the children's librarian is invited to talk to them.

For the students who do practice teaching there are several beginnings made toward establishing a library habit and consciousness. All student-teachers in reading, in the grades from the second through the eighth, bring their groups to the children's room either for a short period each week or for a longer period once in two weeks. The student teacher usually plans with the children's librarian some of the books which she wishes to introduce at the library hour and she helps the children in their selection of books. The children's librarian is ready to help whenever needed but leaves the responsibility of the library visit with the student-teacher. In this way the student-teacher must become acquainted with a certain number of books and receives from observation of the visits to the library an appreciation of their value to the children and their importance in any teaching plan.

Each week the children's librarian has library conferences with these students. The conferences are planned to make the library hour more effective and to make the connection between it and a library hour in the schools where the student will later be teaching. Emphasis is placed on the appreciation of good books and discrimination in the choice of books to recommend to the children. Ways of introducing books are discussed and tried and special questions such as books for Christmas, books for reading aloud, and books for poor readers are considered.

That the student-teachers may be equipped to teach the use of books and libraries to their future pupils, these lessons are given by them to the Training School children rather than by the children's librarian. This is done under the librarian's supervision. All students in the college have had lessons in the use of the library for their own work but those lessons worked out for the Training

School children are fuller and adapted to their grades and need.

The supervisors or critic teachers, being themselves strongly convinced of the importance of the library in a school, expect students teaching in any subject to use extensively the library resources. Assignments in history, geography, nature study or whatever subject it may be, are supplemented by material in the library which concerns the subject. This co-operation from the supervisors gives the student another point of view of the part a well-selected book collection can and should play in a school. Each new educational development requires a broader use of books. One requirement for successful teaching is a good book collection. If that is demonstrated in the work at the teacher training institution, students going out to teach will feel the necessity for good libraries in their elementary schools and will use what libraries they have to the best advantage.

One of the needs for the future is that of introducing a course in the selection of books for children as recommended by the A. L. A. Education Committee in the "Course of Study in the Use of the Library for Teachers Colleges and Normal Schools" prepared by the Normal Sub-committee, Miss Mary J. Booth, chairman, in the School Library Yearbook Number One. Such a course would be in addition to the Children's Literature course mentioned above and would be taught by the children's librarian.

For teachers who plan to go into rural schools there are particular library problems. With these problems in mind, the librarian meets the rural education classes, giving them instruction in the organization and administration of a rural school library and in the selection and care of books. Some practical work is done, especially in book repair. For the use of the rural teachers there is soon to be a model rural school library. Exhibits of material and organized samples to be used in rural libraries are shown during the classes.

Then, to seniors, a talk is given each year on the library facilities which a teacher in service may expect to draw upon. This em-

PRACTICES IN THE PROFESSIONAL TREATMENT OF ENGLISH

MARGARET E. CRANSWICK

London, England

TEACHERS COLLEGES at the present time are rather keenly aware of their function. One indication of this awareness is the effort to define the content of their courses in detail. If an academic college lists a survey of English literature in its catalogue, that is sufficient, for from long experience we have a fair idea of the content of such a course. But a professional college selects its material on a different basis, so that without an explicit description we have no means of knowing what will be considered important and what omitted. Moreover, the organization of a teachers college should be elastic, so that shifting of emphasis, reorganization of courses or re-division of material is possible. An explicit description of every course simplifies such adjustments by showing the overlapping and correlation of topics. By way of contrast the two following descriptions are offered, the first from an academic college, the second from a teachers college:—

1. *Shakespeare.* An extensive course covering twenty plays in class, with other plays for collateral reading.
2. *Shakespeare.* The comedies, the romantic plays and the poems. The reading of all Shakespeare's comedies and romances and of the poems.

A more careful study of a few plays which are often taught in high-school and college courses. A survey of materials available for use by teachers. A study of Shakespeare, the man of the Elizabethan stage.

Topics: The pre-eminence of Shakespeare. The place of Shakespeare in Elizabethan drama. The setting: England and London in the time of Elizabeth. The theatrical companies. The playhouses. Early editions of Shakespeare's plays: quartos and folios. Chronological order of the plays. Biography of Shakespeare. Verse structure in the plays. Dramatic structure. Cursive reading, with criticism, of all the

comedies and romances—Emphasis, regarding aspects for teaching, on *The Comedy of Errors*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Tempest*. The poems. A bibliography for the study of Shakespeare.

This explicitness or, rather, the consciousness of purpose that gives rise to it, is perhaps the most valuable asset of the teachers colleges, which have above everything to be keenly responsive to change and delicately adjusted to life and thought outside themselves.

The more definitely professional schools have certain general characteristics which distinguish them from others in which, although there may be professional courses, the organization of the curriculum is unfavorable. Rigid distinctions between the various divisions of English are being broken down. Chicago makes no sharp division between oral and written composition, Detroit has a course for freshmen in which oral and written composition and literature are all used in an effort to provoke the communication of experience. Glassboro, N. J., has broken down the divisions almost completely, having all its English work listed in the catalogue as one course, and administered in topics which are taught as the need for them becomes apparent.

Close connection between the normal department and the training school is also a distinguishing feature of the completely professional schools. The connection at Glassboro is such that demonstrations can be arranged at short notice, with the likelihood of the students seeing what they need to see. But for this, the topical arrangement would lose half its value. Again, in such schools all the work which has to do with English is taken charge of by the English departments. For example, while at Ypsilanti dramatics and similar courses are taken by the speech

department, at Peabody, not only these, but even directed teaching of English is in the charge of the English department. The loss to the English department of one aspect of English work prevents the organic development of the subject which distinguishes teachers college English from the English of an academic college.

The stumbling blocks to professionalism, apart from the difficulties of organization, have been the courses which deal with content not of direct use in the school classroom and those designed to make up deficiencies in the students' previous education. In two-year schools the latter offer the only difficulty, because, by reason of the shortness of the training period, it is impossible to give instruction in matter which will not actually be used by the students in their teaching. Some of the two-year schools have contrived to make this work professional. At Glassboro the elasticity of the curriculum enables the instructors to deal with weaknesses as they arise, instead of providing a separate course. At Detroit there is a separate course for freshmen, but it is itself administered in a manner which is eminently transferable to school-work. It is professional by example.

It is in the latter kind of course that there lies the possibility of professionalizing content courses, such as must be given in four-year schools. Content courses dealing with matter

that the students will not have to teach, are bound to become increasingly important, especially as the training schools take up the preparation of high-school teachers, but they cannot become professional except by the way in which they are taught. They must be like certain freshman courses at Ypsilanti, where groups of students work out problems, a proceeding followed by individual students engaged in more advanced work at Peabody College; or they must be like American literature at Geneseo, N. Y., where the class-room has become an informal reading-room, so that the students begin class sessions in a gentle simmer of speculation. Instances could be multiplied of courses in more or less advanced subject-matter, which have become professional by being taught in a way that sets an example to the students for their own teaching. If this is now being done there is nothing in the way of the evolution of a completely professional four-year curriculum.

The only query which comes to the mind of the outsider is whether young teachers stand to lose anything by being segregated at the college age from people who are to be engaged in other kinds of work. The advantage of the academic college is that it brings together persons who are to be engaged in all sorts of occupations. A four-year teachers college, with all its professional advantages, deprives its students of the enlivening contact with people who are not going to teach.

A DIARY

EMMA L. SCHRADER

Kensington Avenue School, Springfield, Massachusetts.

ARE THERE any of us who do not remember how as children, we used to delight in trying to do things "just like big people"? Who of us, in those perhaps not far distant years, do not remember the joy of playing house and doing just what we saw Mother do, or of playing school and imitating our teachers? What boy in these days has not tried to emulate Babe Ruth or tried to do "what my father does"? As the years pass, children change very little in their likes and dislikes. You no doubt have found this true many times in your work, as I have in mine.

Last September one of my boys brought to school a small diary. It was an old one but he thought it was a treasure because it had not been used. Before school he showed it to his friends. I could see a group around him when I was doing hall duty. Their interest gave me an idea.

After our opening exercises every morning we always have a short talk. Sometimes the teacher starts the ball a-rolling but more often the children have topics to suggest.

The morning the diary appeared I asked, "What were you showing to the children, David?" and the answer came quickly, "A diary." "What is a diary for?" was my next question. That was enough. Several tried to answer at the same time. After we remembered to be polite, much discussion followed. Before the period closed, excitement started again for I asked, "How would you like to keep a diary?" Would they? Well, the vote was unanimous in favor of doing something like grown ups. "When can we begin?" came next and they looked a little disappointed when I told them, "Not for three days."

The principal of our school was to be away for several months and when I saw David's diary I thought immediately of having the pupils keep a diary while our principal was away.

When the three days had passed our principal had gone and I told the pupils of my plan. They entered into the idea heartily as I explained what we would have to do. Not all could write in the diary every day. We should have to take turns. The spelling must be correct, the sentences well formed and the writing neatly done.

When the writing was first begun, class discussion brought out the fact that the weather was always mentioned in diaries pupils had seen. This came to be a fixed order in our diary. Special days always received attention. Science material such as a turtle, a crab, polliwogs, a new rabbit and many kinds of flowers were items of especial interest. New songs, poems, dances, games and handwork of various kinds were of importance and had to be described.

My class is a 3A and 3B. Some had had much more written language than others, but all helped in the work. Some one would suggest, "I think we ought to put that in the diary," or "That would be nice to write about for the diary" or sometimes would come, "We forgot to write about our new cart in the diary," or still again, "Don't you think Miss Chase would like to know about that?"

The interest never seemed to flag. If an unusually busy day came and for the time our minds were very much occupied with some new work, we would forget the diary for a whole morning. Before the day was over, someone would remind us and then it would appear to you, had you been in the classroom, that all other work ought to stop in order to write our doings in the diary.

Usually five or six children a day would contribute to the diary. When every one had written once, we would start all over again. Sheets of punched letterhead were used. The pupils whose turn it was to write, were given slips of paper upon which to write the event assigned to them. This meant the writing of

complete sentences with correct spelling as well as something of interest. When words could not be spelled the teacher urged trying by the use of phonics. If this did not prove satisfactory some better speller was allowed to spell the word or to find it in the dictionary. Previously I had not thought of having third grade pupils use a dictionary, but the work of the diary has been an incentive and many are now able to find words for themselves or to help others in writing work assigned to them. When the events were correctly written on the small slips they were copied on the white paper.

As the diary grew the question of a cover arose. "What color was the cover of David's diary?" "Black," was the answer. "Then we ought to have black for ours," and the teacher found some large sheets of black drawing paper. "What was on the cover of David's diary?" "Just the word 'Diary' in gold letters" came from someone, and a question followed, "Couldn't we cut some letters out of gold paper?" "Certainly we can," I replied and later a lesson in the cutting of letters was given.

Now came a day for pasting. Cardboard, not too heavy, was procured. This had to be measured to fit the sheets of punched white paper. Then the black paper was measured and cut the correct size for the cardboard. When the black paper cover had been fastened securely a white lining was measured, cut and pasted in place making the covers look "just like real book covers" as the children said. The practice letters for the word "Diary" were now selected and tried out to determine the proper size and placing on the cover. When this had been decided upon the practice letters were used as patterns and the final letters cut from gold paper. These were pasted in place on the outside cover and when the sheets of the diary were fastened together, sighs of satisfaction were heard throughout the room.

After our principal returned, she was invited to come to our room and the diary was presented to her by a group of smiling pupils.

"What did the pupils gain from such a piece of work?" you may ask. In carrying

out this unit of work there has been opportunity for oral and written language, spelling, writing, use of dictionary, drawing, science and a little arithmetic. There has been ample opportunity, too, for character development and a fuller sense of citizenship, for the children had shown pride in work well done, willingness to help their neighbors and joy in giving pleasure to others.

Did the children never tire of going on with this work? This is a question which I had asked myself and will answer for you. After the diary was presented to our principal I had planned some other written language and did not expect to keep another diary. The very next day, however, the Diary was mentioned. "We haven't written in the Diary today," came from a pupil before the morning was over. "But we gave our Diary away yesterday," I replied. "Can't we write another one?" was heard from another pupil and I returned with, "Aren't you tired of keeping a diary?" Many voices answered, "No." It was decided to take a vote to settle the question and as the "Ayes" predominated, the Diary was continued.

Many times the Diary has been referred to just as "grown ups" do to verify a date or to settle some question under discussion. When the seeds were planted it was recorded in the Diary and later, when a discussion arose as to how many weeks the plants had been growing, a voice was heard saying, "Look it up in the Diary." When we wished to know just what day we read a certain story, we looked it up in the Diary.

The school year is almost at an end and at its close these interested little people will leave a record of work achieved, a record covering eight months of our school year. The Diary was started the last week in September and with the exception of one month, when I was away, was kept every day of the school year.

Following are some days' records selected from different months:

Wed. Sept. 30, 1925.

The sun shines today. It is cool. The wind blows.

The men came to weigh and measure us today.

We are learning a poem by Mr. Stevenson. It is called "The Sun's Travels."

Miss Norrgard is our new drawing teacher. She made us a Chinese cart. We are going to try to make one like it.

We wrote a story about Chinese Kites on some big white paper today.

Thursday Oct. 22, 1925.

The sun is shining. The sky is blue.

We talked about our school motto—Better today than yesterday.

Doris brought in an oak leaf. It is 11 inches long. It is the biggest leaf I ever saw.

Jean brought in a maple leaf. It is 7 inches wide and 10 inches long.

Miss Norrgard came to see us. She showed us how to make pictures of boys running.

Friday Nov. 13, 1925

Last night it rained very hard and the wind blew. Today it is very cloudy.

This morning we wrote some letters to our mothers and fathers to ask them to come and visit us next week.

David brought eleven dandelion blossoms to school this afternoon. He found them in a yard on Dickinson St.

Anita brought one dandelion blossom and that makes a dozen blossoms today.

A man from New York came to visit us this morning.

Eleanor is teaching us a November song.

Tuesday Nov. 17, 1925.

This is a gray day. It is colder than yesterday. The wind blows.

We did our Indian dance and sang our Indian song for Mrs. Ranney and Miss Manning and Miss Carpenter.

We drew two pictures of an apple, one whole apple and one half apple. The half apple shows the inside.

Last month two visitors who were here took some of our papers away. Yesterday they sent the papers back. They sent a letter and a booklet with the papers. The booklet is about Lexington and the Pilgrims. We are going to write a letter to thank the lady for the booklet.

David Cummings brought a cotton bud and cotton boll to school today. Some of his

friends sent it to him. They came from Florida.

Miss Evans brought two men to see our Indian dance this afternoon.

Monday Dec. 14, 1925.

It is cloudy. The wind blows very hard. A few snowflakes fell this morning. There was some ice on the sidewalks.

We talked about all kinds of evergreens this morning.

The girls played the Farmer in the Dell out at recess.

We pasted the pictures in the cloth book today. The book is for a little poor child.

Eleanor D'Amato wrote the best letter to Santa Claus last Friday afternoon. She asked Santa Claus for a gift for her mother and her big sister and her little sister.

Tuesday Dec. 22, 1925.

It is very foggy this morning. It has been raining a little. Last night it rained.

Our teacher wrote sentences on the board about evergreens. The children read the sentences to themselves. They answered them out loud.

Everett brought a record with two songs on it, Joy to the World and O Come all Ye Faithful. We played the songs twice on the Victrola.

We had a number test this morning.

Today is the first day of winter. It is the shortest day of all the year.

Friday Feb. 19, 1926.

Today is very foggy. Last night it rained.

Mr. Fisk is painting our small tables today.

Our spelling is—"Anything that is worth doing at all, is worth doing well." George Washington said this.

Some children drew big pictures of boys skating on the blackboard this morning.

The children made some speeches about George Washington.

Monday March 8, 1926.

It snowed and rained yesterday. This morning the sun is trying to shine.

Our teacher read us about the St. Bernard dogs who live on the Alps Mountains. They rescue people who are lost in the snow.

A lady who went across the ocean to Switzer-

land brought our teacher a carved paper cutter. On the handle there is a carved flower like a flower that grows on the Alps.

One of our boys brought half a dozen thimbles to use when we sew in school.

Tuesday March 30, 1926.

The sky is gray. It is warmer today than yesterday. Last night it snowed. We think it is going to rain.

The teacher read us a story this morning. The name of it is The Laughing Pig. It made every body happy that looked at it.

We like the story very much.

We had a visitor. She liked our room very much.

Some girls in our room made a black cover for our second diary.

Some children made the word diary out of gold paper.

Miss Evans came to see us. We went down to the kindergarten.

We did our new dance. Then we played a game. Miss Evans played on the piano.

We had a fire drill this afternoon.

Friday May 7, 1926.

The sun is shining today. This is a very nice day. The sky is blue.

A girl in fifth grade brought a cloth rabbit to school. She sewed it. She stuffed it with cotton. She brought it in our room for us to see because we have a rabbit boarder. The girl made a green jacket for the rabbit.

We are writing stories about milk today.

We had two visitors this morning.

We have many pictures of cows in our room.

This afternoon we are going to color little cards with health rhymes and funny pictures on them.

Wednesday May 19, 1926.

The sun is trying to shine. The sky is a little blue and a little gray. The wind is blowing. We thought it was going to rain.

This morning we went out in the hall to see some pictures. There were five big colored pictures hanging there. The pictures are about safety. The children in the fourth grade are writing a serial story about the pictures.

Four visitors came to our room this morning.

A boy in another room caught a King Bee. He put it in a glass. He brought it to our room for us to see. It buzzed for us.

Some of the children in our room colored some health cards for our teacher.

THE TEACHERS COLLEGE LIBRARY

(Continued from page 167)

phasizes the Library Division of the State Department of Education, the county library, the public library, the school library, and other state and national agencies.

A satisfactory working out of all that a teacher should expect from her training to fit her adequately to use books, to enjoy them herself, and to pass that knowledge and enjoyment on to her children, is still far ahead. By experimenting and combining the experiences of many schools which train teachers we may look forward to the recognition of work

in the library and book field as an essential part of the course of these schools. As this time draws nearer more of the teachers who go out into schools are getting a sense of the meaning of books in the work and play of their children. They are the ones who are going to give "the right book to the right child at the right time," who will teach our boys and girls to love reading just for the joy they get from it and also to know how to get the best there is from the libraries which are at their service.

DRAMATICS AT FAIRHOPE¹

A BIT OUT OF ONE TEACHER'S NOTEBOOK

GRACE ROTZEL
Valley Cottage, N. Y.

UNDER THE OLD standard of education the emphasis was on production. What has the child accomplished? A beautiful examination paper, a finished piece of craft work? Then he must be educated.

Under the new standards the emphasis is on the child. How has this work he has been doing affected him? Is he mentally alert, physically fit? Is he sincere? If so, he is being educated; if not, no amount of beautiful results can atone for the loss of sincerity or for physical instability.

With this newer standard in mind we set to work in Fairhope to arrange a program of dramatics that would have as its aim the education of the child. We do not claim any startling results or any unique contributions to pedagogy, but looking back over four years, we feel that the program justified itself. Hence these notes on our experience.

At the outset let me say that we had the finest children in the United States to work with. I can feel some one questioning the sweepingness of that statement, but of course I cannot allow any question on that. As one teacher said, "There are good, bad and indifferent ones here, but they are very much nicer than any others I have ever known." I immediately rated that teacher as very intelligent. The children do lead natural lives in a very simple environment, and the school has managed to keep them keen and unspoiled. They have been brought up, for the most part, sufficiently remote from civilization, not to have been thwarted by it. As to our equipment—well, our equipment was perfect. It left practically everything to the imagination.

In the first place every child is naturally dramatic. He loves acting out Odysseus at

the Achaean games. He is thrilled if he can be Columbus sailing up the bay to take possession in the name of Spain. These dramatizations, outdoors and in, must have their place in the child's life from kindergarten to the end of school. But in addition to that, after he emerges from the lower grades we felt that every child should have each year an experience with a ready made play. It should not be an outside activity exclusively for those with especial skill, but part of the regular routine. The task of finding suitable plays with the right number of people in them is no small one. I have spent literally nights and days reading plays, and not a little of my income buying them, before I found possible ones. Accompanying this article is a list of the plays I have used, hoping that a teacher with a similar problem will write down her list, and pass it on.

If a play is required, it must be done in school time. I know that in some cases teachers will say that the curriculum demands are already so heavy that this is impossible. That may be true, but I am ready to venture the heretical opinion that three weeks spent on a play justifies the effort, and with all due respect to most curriculum makers, would never be missed.

Since the aim was education rather than production, the group made most of the decisions. By education I do not mean using a play to "put over" history or manners or morals or stage craft. There might be incidental byproducts in these directions. Indeed there couldn't help but be. But they should be incidental. The play must be worth doing in itself. The children selected the play from a group which I presented. There, in the selection of that group, I used all the authority I could muster. I generally managed to refuse to have anything to do with plays I considered poor, but sometimes in the inter-

¹ Editor's Note: This article will be found helpful and suggestive by the teacher who has in her classes, mature and sophisticated pupils, for many of the plays mentioned will interest chiefly the older children. However, the principles discussed and the experiences recounted apply equally to younger boys and girls.

ests of education I even fostered them as I will explain later. When once the play had caught the group, the children really did the producing. They selected the casts. Their judgment in this respect was always as good as mine and frequently much better. I cannot account for it but it is one of those jolts that adults living in a young world experience. I called rehearsals, helped in the color schemes, made them talk loud enough for the doorman to hear and otherwise did odd jobs that might have been neglected.

One of my first experiences was with Lady Gregory's *DRAGON*. I read it to a class and they liked it so much that I suggested we dramatize it for the public. They were fired with the idea, though some were afraid they wouldn't be able to do it justice, since most of them had not only never been in a play but had never been inside of a theatre. I told them we wouldn't do it for the public. We would do it for the fun of it. If the public got some fun out of it, all right; if not, all right. We were the ones concerned. We spent three and a half weeks on it. The youngsters made the Celtic jewelry, bought cloth, used some gunny sacks, dyed them, made the robes, trimmed them with Celtic designs, made their sandals, made stage scenery, and helped make the green and gold monster himself. In fact, they did the whole business. We always had our rehearsals in the morning. We gave the play without anyone's getting so tired of it that it became a bore. Incidentally it was a good performance and the public enjoyed it.

Our first stage curtain we made for a production of *THE TURTLE DOVE*, a Chinese play by Margaret Scott Oliver. One of the girls made the back drop which was a huge reproduction of the willow pattern plate. As that took sixty yards of unbleached muslin there was no chance of our having money enough for anything except unbleached for our front curtain. We set out to dye it the required royal blue. We gathered in a dooryard where there was a big iron kettle used by the negro washwoman, built a roaring pine knot fire and dyed all one hot afternoon. It would have been an unbearable job had it not been for

the wit and cleverness of one of the girls who told stories and made us forget how sticky and uncomfortable we were. Only the other day I met one of those girls. "Do you remember the day we dyed the blue curtain?" said she. "Didn't we have fun?" They certainly did and they gave an artistic performance. Another play in the same manner, *THE STOLEN PRINCE*, by Dan Totheroth, was given by a rollicking group of older children. They painted some stunning Chinese costumes, and in spite of their giggling age, managed to summon large quantities of dignity when they put them on. I liked these plays for their artistic simplicity and for the stimulus to the imagination provided by the property man.

One of the jolliest entertainments we ever produced was *ALICE IN WONDERLAND*. I think every school ought to do *ALICE IN WONDERLAND* every four years if they get as much pure joy out of it as we did. We had in our art department a genius in making heads. Nothing like a gryphon or a mock turtle ever presented too big a problem for her. It was just fun. Of course the children thought so too, and worked early and late on those fantastic costumes. The town's bad boy was the Cheshire cat and what a success that cat was!

Oh well, you say, any teacher can rave over her children!

Not all the plays I have given have I considered good ones. The particular time when I deliberately worked on an inferior play, it fell out in this manner. We had in school a boy, Drayton by name, who hadn't been able to fit in anywhere. He came to us after much experience with other schools. In science laboratory he invariably broke the test tubes and exploded all the explosives. Not from any devilish purpose. It just happened that way when Drayton was around. His history papers might have been good but no one could read them. He had a very serious inferiority complex that affected his very gait. One day he came to me with his face tense. He grabbed my hand and said, "I have a perfectly splendid play that you must put on. I don't want to be in it, but if you will only let me I will do all the work. We just must do it." Mrs.

Johnson says it is the part of wisdom to accede to a child's request unless what he asks is physically impossible or morally wrong. I decided that this time, unless it was physically impossible or morally wrong, the wish should be granted. It was neither. But I had an inward slump when I discovered that the play was *WHAT HAPPENED TO JONES*. Now there is nothing the matter with *WHAT HAPPENED TO JONES* except that it has a very ordinary plot and its humor is cheap. I tried gently to point out a little of this to Drayton but he listened with unhearing ears. He was mentally planning the stage scenery and the advertising campaign. He would work his head off. It was the one thing that he longed to do. In the interests of education we did it. Then about ten days before the time scheduled for the play the leading man left school. Drayton had done nothing but eat and sleep with that play. He knew practically everybody's lines and of course he was the logical person to take the part. He did it with reluctance but did it beautifully. The night of the play the school went mad over him. They saw him as a person of power. Later he went to the School of the Theatre and wrote back to me. "I understand now what you mean by an artistic play. I have passed through the *What-Happened-To-Jones* stage." I think he did quite successfully for when I saw him he was playing with Walter Hampden in *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

I think we worry too much about children's literary taste. Time changes the size of their feet. It isn't inconceivable that it may change their inner furnishings as well. In the meantime let them have experience with many kinds of literature. Gradually they will develop the basis of sound judging.

Another method of dramatization which I have used in moderation is the marionette theatre. The chief difficulty with that is the keeping the figures and stage simple. The complicated manipulation is very nerve wearing to an adolescent, but if he can get his effects with bold strokes, he works calmly at it and learns much. One year the pupils decided to make a marionette theatre, provide it with electric lights and all the appurtenances

of a real stage. We met evenings with the shop man, some times in the shop and sometimes in my class room around the fireplace. They produced Chaucer's *CHANTECLEER AND PERTELOTE* with a flock of fowls that would do credit to any barnyard. After that performance, one entire class took it up. One group did *ANDROCLES AND THE LION*. Another gave the story of *PEGASUS*. Another gave the *THREE WISE MEN*. They were effectively done. But I am convinced that marionettes are valuable only for a limited number of mechanically minded students, whereas having a part in a real play is a valuable experience for anybody.

As I said in the beginning, I do not claim that we have done anything that is not being done in other schools. I offer this list of plays simply as plays that have functioned in the educational growth of one set of Fairhope students. Three of them were done by the faculty. They are not all of the same quality but all have royalties which, by the way, it is quite possible to pay even though the audiences are small and the entrance fees low. I have found that we always had some money left over even when we paid a royalty of forty-five dollars. They have been plays to sharpen one's wits on, and plays that for the most part, have furnished real artistic experiences.

Alice in Wonderland—Mrs. Burton's arrangement

The Dragon—Lady Gregory

One Act Plays

Neighbors—Zona Gale

Uncle Jimmy—Zona Gale

The Turtle Dove—Margaret Scott Oliver

The Stolen Prince—Dan Tothoroth

Figureheads—Louise Saunders

The Knave of Hearts—Louise Saunders

Nevertheless—Stuart Walker

Sir David Wears a Crown—Stuart Walker

All Gummed Up—(in *Twenty Modern Plays*, collected by Frank Shay)

'Lijah—Edgar Valentine Smith

The Flower Shop—Winifred Hawkrige

The Traveling Man—Lady Gregory

Finders-Keepers—George Kelly

The Ghost Story—Booth Tarkington

SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR DRAMATICS IN RURAL SCHOOLS¹

FAYE SWEET
Detroit, Michigan

DESPITE THE inconveniences and inadequacies of the typical rural school, there is yet no real reason why the aesthetic value of amateur dramatics should be overlooked. Since the dawn of civilization theatricals have been important in learning and entertainment, and this delight need not be denied to the vast numbers of our rural population who live in the one-room school districts.

Although modern educational ideas are now accepted throughout the country, there still exist unnumbered schools of the old backwoods type. These little out-of-date school-houses still serve their purpose in the sparsely settled communities or out of the way places where the consolidated system is impracticable.

In these typical rural communities it often happens that the school entertainment is the only form of amusement available during the long winter. This is the period of rest for the farmers and they usually attend any affair that is given. The school entertainment is especially well attended because nearly every family will have either a member playing in it or know someone who is taking a part. So the radio is turned off for that evening and Father, Mother and all the children pile into the Ford and go to the show. And if a worthwhile production is staged, the aesthetic value is inestimable, for besides furnishing diversion to the community, an ease of manner and poise before an audience is gained by the children which can be acquired in no other way.

The question then develops how to take the assorted group of a country school, and produce an acceptable play in a one-room schoolhouse.

Let us think for a moment of the type of school which is typically rural. It has one

large room which is entered through a hallway with dressing-rooms on each side. Perhaps there is a furnace, but more often there is a large round stove for heat with benches placed around it. There are windows on two sides, while the back wall is taken up with blackboard. The desks are usually the double type with many an initial carved thereon. To take such a room as this and re-model it into a theatre is a task requiring no little ingenuity, but it can be done, and beautiful effects may be obtained.

Usually the main idea to be considered by the country school teacher is expense. She knows it is needless to try to get an appropriation from the school board for anything as "foolish as play actin'." "You just stick to reading writing and 'rithmetic, that's what we pay you for, but if you do have your party I'll come," is their attitude. So what investments are made must come from the teacher's own funds, forcing the necessity of a successful play if she is to be reimbursed.

The points to be considered are the stage, dressing-rooms, lights, curtain, seats, costumes and the play. Of these points the most important by far is the choice of the play. Do not choose an elaborate play. Keeping in mind the untrained children who are the players, the audience to be played to, and the inconvenient school room which is the theatre, one would hardly attempt Shakespeare. Something simple and easily understood is preferable. Frances Hodgson Burnett's *LITTLE PRINCESS* is especially recommended. The *TOYMAKER OF NÜRMURG* is very good if there are a few older boys and girls in the school. This play does not require elaborate scenery or expensive costumes. There is a song called *THE TOYMAN'S SHOP* by Emilie Paulsson² which the younger children

¹This paper was written in connection with a course given by Mr. C. C. Certain at Detroit Teachers College, 1928.

²Holiday Songs by Emilie Paulsson, Milton Bradley Co., Springfield, Mass.

could sing and which would add a charming touch. *SIX WHO PASS WHILE THE LENTILS BOIL* is a quaint old English play which is very easy to stage and is always well received. If the majority of the pupils are under twelve a pretty fairy tale play is good. Some of the rollicking bits from *Robin Hood* are children's favorites. There are many appropriate *Robin Hood* songs as *UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE*. Then there are some really good plays which may be had from the publishing houses who make a specialty of them, lists of which may be obtained from any book store. Just a word of caution. Do not produce a copyrighted play without the author's consent when the acting rights are withheld.

To make a stage is not such a difficult task as it sounds. The main thing to avoid is building it too high. It should be not over two feet. The higher the stage, the more pronounced will be the effect of theatricalism. Also the high stage is a positive discomfort to the spectators. The local lumber yard will probably rent a few boards for a small fee.

If there are no other curtains obtainable, sheets borrowed from the children's homes will serve. Stretch a wire from one side of the room to the other directly over the front edge of the stage. Run other wires from the main wire to the back wall. Put the curtains on these wires and you will have two good dressing rooms, one on each side of the stage.

Neighbors are nearly always willing to loan from their homes anything needed for stage properties or furniture.

Lighting is a troublesome feature if there is no electricity. In that event try to obtain as many oil lamps as possible with wall brackets and reflectors. Do not use candles or oil lamps for footlights in the mistaken idea that footlights are necessary. They are not needed. Even where there is electricity it is much better to have the regular lighting than to try to improvise footlights. A soft spot light, which may be attached to a base plug, is helpful.

If the desks in the schoolroom are movable, it would be worth while to take them out and use folding chairs instead. These can some-

times be borrowed from a nearby church or from the local undertaker. The audience feels much more at ease sitting in chairs than they possibly could sitting at desks too small for them. The children also get more of the feeling of the importance of the event.

In costuming, to err on the side of simplicity is much better than overelaborateness. It is not necessary to use expensive materials. A queen's gown made of cambric or from a discarded drape is quite as effective as a velvet importation, if the style is representative. That is the important thing in costuming. Keep the costumes in the period represented. Very good wigs may be made from crepe paper. Do not use grease paints. The fresh rosy cheeks of the children are much more attractive if not heavily made up. A little rouge and lip stick, such as even a small country schoolchild carries in her hand bag, is all that is desirable. The audience sits too near the stage for grease paints to be effective.

Music adds a distinctive touch to the entertainment. If there is no piano in the school, try to induce someone who can play the violin or other musical instrument, to contribute to the evening's success.

Allow as many children as possible to enter into the preparation of the play. Perhaps all may not be actors, but there is also the business side of production to be considered. Let one responsible person, not in the play, take charge of the tickets. Even the youngest child may sell tickets. Others may have charge of decorating the schoolhouse and stage. Two or three may act as property men, assembling all the articles needed for use on the stage. The harder the children work, the more they feel that it is their play, and so interest becomes keener.

There is not a branch of school work that will give greater joy to the teacher than dramatics. There is a feeling of satisfaction in the knowledge that she has done her bit toward brightening her little world. Even though the work of preparation and production is arduous, the smiling faces she sees and the congratulations she is sure to receive, are great compensation.

TEACHING CHILDREN TO MEMORIZE A POEM

BERTHA M. ROGERS

*Supervisor of Elementary and Kindergarten Education
Janesville, Wisconsin*

MEMORIZING IS ONE form of habit making. It consists of learning things in their order. A poem, according to Coleridge, is "the best words in their best order." Memorizing a poem involves learning the words exactly as the author wrote them and acquiring the ability to repeat them with that sort of interpretation which harmonizes with the thought and mood of the selection. As "the art of remembering is the art of thinking," memorizing follows thoughtful study.

Interest is of primary importance. The relative quantity and quality of reflection which the pupil brings to bear upon each repetition is conditional upon his interest in the learning of the poem. The extent and character of the feeling which accompanies his attention determines the strength of his mental effort.

A feeling of expectation accompanies the approach if the teacher provides for a body of related ideas which furnishes a basis for a full understanding and appreciation of the selection. For illustration, let us consider Tennyson's, *SWEET AND LOW*. In preparation for the study, the group may sing a familiar lullaby similar to, *THE AUTUMN LULLABY*.

AUTUMN LULLABY¹

The sun has gone from the shining skies

Bye-Baby-Bye.

The dandelions have closed their eyes

Bye-Baby-Bye.

The stars are lighting their lamps to see

If babes and squirrels and birds all three
Are sound asleep as they ought to be.

Bye-Baby-Bye.

Besides, the group may include an additional stanza previously composed by one of its members such as the following:

ORIGINAL²

The leaves have fallen to the ground

Bye-Baby-Bye.

So under the snow they're safe and sound
Bye-Baby-Bye.

The wind has blown a sheet of snow,
And oh! how loud the wind doth blow,
For he wants to cover the leaves, I know.

Bye-Baby-Bye.

They may listen, also, to such a lullaby as Schubert's.

In addition, the teacher may sketch an interesting background, and at the same time familiarize the children through her talk with the meaning and pronunciation of the strange words in the poem, thus: "When Tennyson wrote this lullaby he was thinking of a sailor's wife and baby in their little home. It was night and while the mother sang to her babe who lay in her arms like a bird 'in the nest' she almost imagined she saw a ship with white sails shining like silver under the 'silver moon.'"³

In the upper grades the preparatory step may sometimes take the form of a presentation of facts which the pupils give as the result of an assignment and which they need for a clear understanding of the poem.

Motive is a controlling factor. The introduction becomes significant if it promises an outcome in action which provides for the exercise of the powers of expression.

This capacity the teacher calls forth when she teaches them to sing a poem to standard music, or when she stimulates them to interpret the poem through impersonation. Pantomime expresses this gift in a highly organized form. Many poems, for example, *LITTLE BO-PEEP*, *THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS*, lend themselves to dramatization.

The teacher utilizes the powers of expression when she guides her pupils in the making

¹Hollis Dann Music Course, Third Year, American Book Company.

²Pupil, Ellen Melrose. Teacher, Rose Gagan, Garfield School, Janesville, Wisconsin.

³Halburton and Smith. Teaching Poetry in the Grades, Houghton, Mifflin.

of a book containing printed or typewritten copies of their favorite poems illustrated with the children's original pictures. Such a book makes it possible for the old favorites to be recalled from time to time and so become lasting possessions.

The teacher follows the natural interests of children when she encourages the recital of poetic selections for special programs, or when she nourishes the natural desire to give pleasure to another, say to a class or to the principal or to an elderly person, who might be entertained by the child's recital of a poem. A sound motive of this sort has possibilities of becoming an active force which controls the entire process of memorization.

A sympathetic comprehension depends, in part, on the pupil's initial acquaintance with the poem, as a whole. In the grammar grades the children can possibly read it silently as a part of their study work, but in the lower grades the first appeal should be to the ear.

After the presentation of a setting, and also of the entire poem, repetitions of the whole poem should follow, with new associations of meaning. In presenting the poem, SWEET AND LOW, for instance, the teacher may ask the class to read silently the poem and tell of whom Tennyson speaks; and to read it silently again and find the lines that tell the sailor's home was near the sea. This consideration of wholes rather than fragmentary parts is the first essential principle to be applied in acquiring a system of ideas by repetition.

The knowledge of the organization leads pupils to grasp a poem in its entirety. For example, consider Stevenson's

FOREIGN LANDS

Up into the cherry tree
Who should climb but little me?
I held the trunk with both my hands
And looked abroad on foreign lands.
I saw the next door garden lie,
Adorned with flowers, before my eye,
And many pleasant places more
That I had never seen before.
I saw the dimpling river pass
And be the sky's blue looking-glass;
The dusty roads go up and down

With people tramping into town.
If I could find a higher tree
Farther and farther I should see,
To where the grown-up river slips
Into the sea among the ships,
To where the roads on either hand
Lead onward into fairy land,
Where all the children dine at five,
And all the playthings come alive.

The first stanza has for a theme, the child's home; the second, the neighbor's door yard, the third, the winding river, the fourth, the ocean, and the fifth, fairyland. Here, "The child climbs the cherry tree and sees his own garden at his feet, his neighbor's garden over the wall, traces the river to its vanishment, and follows it in his mind's eye to its fall into the far away sea, and then he strays on into the world of his own fancy, a perfect vanishing point. The perceiving that the poem is a unit of varied parts and unfolds in accordance with a plan of arrangement, leads to a recognition of its structure."⁴

The recognition of the beautiful plan or design of a poem helps to fix the selection in the memory. The teacher guides the pupils in doing this when she recognizes throughout the lesson or series of lessons the poem's natural pauses.

If the selection is lengthy, the end of each lesson should coincide with the changes in thought.

In the grammar grades, as soon as the pupils have read the poem and become acquainted with the poem as a whole, they possibly can undertake the analysis work if they have a good assignment. But in the lower grades the teacher points out what is worthy of notice in each division by such thought-provoking questions as will help the children to get the meaning of the words and phrases through the content.

As far as possible they should answer in the words of the poem, for neither they nor the teacher are likely to substitute as fitting English as the poet's.

Questions and explanations that aid in the visualization of the pictures and the apprecia-

⁴ McClintock, *Teaching Literature in the Schools*, University of Chicago Press.

tion of the peculiar beauty of the words give added meaning. For instance, such a question, on *SWEET AND LOW*, as, "Of these two actual pictures of the sea, which do you think is a better illustration of our poem and why?" aims to lead the pupils to appreciate the word pictures in the poem.

When a poem has a unit, the thought of which is so beyond the comprehension as to hinder an appreciation of the poem as a whole, then the class considers the small units or subdivisions. In this case, the pupils return constantly to the whole, in order to fix the parts in the continued course of ideas which they seek to knit together. They need not comprehend every detail or over analyze, for, as they grow older, widening experiences will give significance to the poem and add beauty to its ideas.

Because of the knowledge gained through the study of the parts a return to the new whole permanently fixes new relations and makes clear the lessons in truth, goodness or beauty.

In *SWEET AND LOW*, such a suggestion as "Read silently and tell us if you think this was a happy baby, and why," has for its aim the focusing of attention upon the parent's love and the happiness within the home. Children can discriminate the main lines of thought and distinguish personal traits, and appreciate inspiring motives, if the teacher herself enjoys the underlying thought and directs the attention of pupils to the author's message.

To fix relations of thought and feeling and to increase vividness, the teacher may ask for an interpretation of the entire poem given as far as possible in the writer's words, and may employ thought provoking questions of such scope and in such sequence as will necessitate reading and re-reading the selection. This idea the following question on Tennyson's poem suggests: "Tell us the poem the mother sang using as much of the language as you can recall." "Read the poem again silently and think of the rate and tone one should use when reading it orally." It is this sort of logical association of ideas which counts most in the possibility of recall.

While the thought connections are the basis for memorizing, it is proper to use aids such as key words of the poem. If the thought connections have been fully made the first and last words of each line of each stanza may be written in their logical order and the pupil may use them. Frequently, the rhyming words alone serve as helps, sometimes an outline is of value, and then again the music is an aid. Such poems as *AMERICA*, and some of *MOTHER GOOSE MELODIES* provide this sort of help. This form of the dramatic is most useful in memorizing.

The pupils, because of the teacher's previous reading, possess some idea of how to read or to recite a given poem.

The form of the recital should harmonize with the thought of the poem. A few poems obviously lend themselves to dialogue, as *WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND?* *WHAT IS PINK?* A few also lend themselves to concert recitation as, *HATS OFF!*, *FATHER IN HEAVEN*, *WE THANK THEE*, but most poems lend themselves only to individual recitations as, *SWEET AND LOW*, and *I HAVE A LITTLE SHADOW*.

With reference to the rendition, the teacher and pupils should avoid giving such mechanical criticisms as, "Read it again, more slowly, or with more expression," although this is easier to say than, "You did not read that well because you did not understand it;" and to follow up the criticism with the study of the unit. To remedy undue emphasis on the last word of every line, she may read one division of thought and the pupil the next. She may also use such a formula as, "You may read the first three pictures in the second stanza."

After individuals have recited the poem, the class should judge the effectiveness of some of the renditions. This the class may do in some such way as the following: "From A's reading, what parts of the poem do you think he most appreciates?" "What did he fail to make us feel?" If there is a social motive as the first part of this article suggests, the pupils may select the child or the children who will best represent them. Thus they will be led to fulfill intelligently their purpose.

(Continued on page 192)

CHILDREN'S CHOICES OF POEMS

MOLLIE HORTON ECKERT

Supervisor of Primary Education, Ellis School, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

IT HAS BEEN the purpose of this study to find out whether children of grades one, two and three actually enjoy reading or hearing read the poems found in their school readers. Irvin Cobb, the humorist, a few years ago took occasion to point out in an article, *A PLEA FOR OLD CAP COLLIER*, published in the *Saturday Evening Post*, that the type of literary material included in the old fashioned "reader" was not likely to develop in children an insatiable thirst for more. He showed in his inimitable way how devoid of appeal to the imagination of children were some of the old standbys of an earlier day, and intimated that many of our modern text books had not yet entirely freed themselves of such poems as *WE ARE SEVEN*, *THE CHILDREN'S HOUR*, or *THE TEMPEST* with its lurid picture of "midnight on the water" and a storm upon the deep.

The teacher who reads a criticism such as was made by Mr. Cobb resents it for the reason that the writer makes no constructive suggestion for the improvement of our reading books. Furthermore, even though such suggestions were forthcoming, they would be open to the criticism that they represent only the opinion of an adult of more or less literary tastes. Such an opinion could hardly be considered final since there are many other adults whose intelligent judgment is probably just as good and as sound as that of a humorist and lecturer.

The method of scientific investigation of such a problem holds forth promise of more conclusive evidence regarding children's interests in poetry. This study, therefore, will be based upon the same fundamental principle as several other studies in this field. If we wish to determine what kind of literature children enjoy we must find out from the children themselves. No amount of adult reasoning or arm-chair theorizing will reveal

as much about children's interests as the children can reveal.

With this thought in mind this study has been made for children in grades one, two and three with the purpose of discovering whether children really like the poems usually found in their reading texts or whether certain sources, not yet generally used, do not contain material which is more attractive to them. The several steps in the procedure employed were (1) selection of poems, (2) reading of these poems to the children, (3) securing a statement of preference from the children and (4) tabulation of the results. The following paragraphs will describe in fuller detail the method used and the results secured.

The first problem that presented itself in making the study was the selection of poems to be used. It was determined to use for each grade fifteen poems. The fifteen poems were divided into three groups of five each, all the poems of one group to be read at a hearing. The three groups were designated A, B and C respectively, to correspond to the three series of readers in use in the Pittsburgh schools. Thus in group A for each grade, four poems were selected from the textbook series A, the fifth poem of the group being selected from a non-textbook source. Poems in groups B and C for each grade were selected in a similar manner, four poems from the textbook series B and C and the fifth poem from an outside source.

The selection of so small a number of poems for this purpose had to be somewhat arbitrary. The writer chose those poems which she had learned as a little girl and which she remembered liking, or else those poems which from her teaching experience with primary children she had found most interesting to her pupils. Some of the newer poems, taken from non-textbook sources, were

brought to her attention in a university course on children's literature.¹

The second step in the study, reading the poems to the children, was done by the writer and five other teachers who assisted her. In order to assure a uniform procedure a set of instructions was prepared and given to each teacher with the list of poems for her grade and with page references showing where each poem might be found. The purpose of the study was explained to the teachers who were asked to coöperate. The reactions of these teachers are given in one of the paragraphs below. A most friendly attitude was shown in every case. The teachers did not all use the same period of the day for the readings but it is not believed that this variation in procedure influenced the results appreciably. The writer saw to it that each teacher had the requisite material at hand when it would be needed so that the assisting teacher had a minimum of work and of trouble in connection with the study. With the exception of one non-textbook source, the additional collections of poems were to be found in the school library where they are available for further reading by the children. The uniform directions are given in the following paragraph. The list of poems used in each grade appears in Table I below.

DIRECTIONS TO TEACHERS

Below are three groups of children's poems, five in each group. Read all the poems in one group at a time. Before reading, tell the children you are going to read them some poems and that you will want them to tell you which of the five they like the very best. After having read them in succession, have the children write on a piece of paper, without communicating to anyone else, the number of the poem which they like best, number 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5. (With first grade children you may have them come

to you and tell you quietly if you prefer.)

After all have indicated their choice, write opposite the name of the poem, the number of children who preferred it. Also give the total number of children in the class.

The third step in the study was securing a statement of preference from the children. The method employed here was different from that used by some others who have investigated children's interests in reading. Instead of having the pupils attempt to rank the poems each child told which of the five poems read he liked *best*. Thus we have *first choices* only. These preferences were indicated in every case immediately after the reading of the group of poems, while the content of the several poems in the group was fresh in the minds of the pupils.

The tabulation of preferences was the fourth step in the procedure and is presented in the table below. It should be noted that in the original tabulation preferences were distributed on the basis of classes or sections in each grade. For the sake of compactness these separate class distributions are grouped and are given in totals. Thus, in the first grade there were six sections or divisions which took part in the study, in the second, there were four groups and in grade three, four groups. The index value following each poem indicates the percentage of pupils in the entire grade who named that poem as their first choice. It will be noted that the total number of pupils for the grade varies from one group of poems to another. This is due to variations in attendance on the various days upon which the reading was done. Inasmuch as the percentage of choices for each group of poems is based upon the number of pupils hearing them, the results are entirely comparable for each group. In each group, poem number 5, marked by an asterisk, is the one taken from a non-textbook source.

¹ This course was given by Miss Helen K. Mackintosh and study was made under her direction.

TABLE I
TABULATION OF CHILDREN'S CHOICES OF POEMS

Grade 1

Group A

No.	Title	Author	No.	Index
1.	Who Has Seen the Wind?	Rossetti	40	20.
2.	The Owl		17	8.5
3.	Stop, Stop, Pretty Water	Eliza Lee Tolen	36	18.
4.	The Star Family	Mary Mapes Dodge	21	10.5
5.	The Owl and the Pussy Cat*	Edward Lear	86	43.
Total			200	

Group B

1.	Three Little Kittens		61	29.2
2.	I Saw a Ship A-sailing		31	14.8
3.	Sing a Song of Sixpence		26	12.4
4.	Over the Meadow	Olive A. Wadsworth	27	13.0
5.	The Lost Shoes*	Walter De la Mare	64	30.6
Total			209	

Group C

1.	The Clouds	Old Rhyme	33	16.4
2.	Our Flag	Mary Howliston	55	27.4
3.	The Little Plant	Kate Louise Brown	18	8.9
4.	The Swing	R. L. Stevenson	37	18.4
5.	Brownie*	A. A. Milne	58	28.9
Total			201	

Grade 2

Group A

1.	The Little Boy's Goodnight	Eliza Lee Tolen	29	18.5
2.	The Shell	Githa Sowerby	14	8.9
3.	May Song.	Katherine Pyle	16	10.2
4.	Little Ducks	Robert Mack	26	16.6
5.	The Table and the Chair*	Edward Lear	72	45.8
Total			157	

Group B

1.	Who Stole the Bird's Nest	Lydia Maria Child	31	20.9
2.	The Moon	R. L. Stevenson	7	4.7
3.	Song of the Grass		19	12.9
4.	To a Honeybee	Alice Cary	19	12.9
5.	Miss T*	Walter De la Mare	72	48.6
Total			148	

Group C

1. Daisies	Frank Dempster Sherman	15	9.8
2. The Swallows	Christina Rossetti	15	9.8
3. The Cow	R. L. Stevenson	14	9.1
4. The Lost Doll	Charles Kingsley	21	13.5
5. Half-way Down*	A. A. Milne	89	57.8
Total		154	

Grade 3

Group A

1. Hiawatha's Childhood	H. W. Longfellow	19	11.5
2. The Flag	W. B. Nesbit	56	33.9
3. Washington's Birthday	Margaret Sangster	46	27.9
4. Foreign Lands	R. L. Stevenson	23	13.9
5. Suppose*	Walter De la Mare	21	12.7
Total		165	

Group B

1. A Boy's Song	James Hogg	29	18.2
2. Robin Redbreast	Wm. Allingham	32	20.8
3. A Boy and the Sheep	Ann Taylor	12	7.5
4. The Tree		18	11.3
5. The Pobble Who Has no Toes*	Edward Lear	68	42.8
Total		159	

Group C

1. Fairyland	Gwendolen Haste	9	5.5
2. Fairy Days	Wm. Makepeace Thackeray	7	4.2
3. The Raindrop's Ride		36	21.8
4. The Christmas Tree	Mary A. McHugh	42	25.5
5. Growing Up*	A. A. Milne	71	43.0
Total		165	

A few words of comment on the preceding tables may serve to point out what seem to be the most significant facts about the data presented.

1. In eight out of nine groups, the poem from a non-textbook source had the greatest number of first choices. When one considers that only *nine* such poems were read and that these nine were compared with thirty-six other poems it becomes evident that there was some-

thing about the non-textbook group which appealed to the children.

2. Some indication of the degree of interest may be had from the Index value (representing the percentage of choices for each group). When the eleven poems in the upper quartile of Index values are considered we find only three that are found in the textbooks. These eleven poems are given below:

(Continued on page 192)

A NEW WAY TO TEACH SPELLING

SHERWIN CODY

Rochester, N. Y.

THE INVESTIGATIONS of Horn and others have given us approximately the correct lists of words most commonly used in writing as a basis for the teaching of spelling in the elementary grades, but all too little progress has been made in finding new and more effective methods of teaching these words.

Spelling is a major problem in elementary composition. Last year in Colorado Springs, where I tested the entire school system in September (1926) and again in May (1927) and controlled the language work during the year in three experimental schools, I made an analysis of 305 test compositions in three schools, covering grades four to seven, and found that of the 3517 errors checked 15.4% were on statements of fact or responses to directions, 17% on capitalization, 17.8% on punctuation (about 35% on these two combined), 31.3% on spelling, and 18.5% on the use of words, including all errors of grammar, omission of words, and flagrantly bad choice of words. It will be seen that spelling comprises about one third of all the errors, capitalization and punctuation another third, and all other errors the remaining third, on the basis of mechanical counting. Misspelling must be eliminated from compositions: how can it be done?

First of all comes a well organized drive on the most frequently used words appropriate to the various grades, according to the best current spelling practice as outlined by Horn. As tested by the Iowa spelling lists, Colorado Springs schools showed an average somewhat below 50% in September, before the introduction of the Horn lists and methods, and slightly over the Iowa norm of 73% after a year's use of them.

In the experimental schools about 20% better results were obtained through giving a very small amount of attention to spelling in the 30-minute language period. This attention was of two different kinds. First, a good

deal of the language work consisted of dictation of a summary paragraph following the reading by the teacher of a chapter from an interesting story, and for this dictation all difficult words were written on the board so that pupils might form the habit of being sure of the spelling before they wrote any word in their notebooks. It was my hope that this would lead to the habit of observing spelling in reading. Also on the same principle, the spelling vocabularies of the third and fourth grades were worked into a series of simple model letters to be copied as a means of teaching spelling and correct letter forms, and also as models to be answered for composition.

The second means of teaching spelling in this language period was a series of word-study lessons intended to sharpen the faculties for observing (a) the sounds of words, and (b) the combinations of letters representing those sounds in spelling. The five teachers who used the method throughout the year in the very slight allowance of time available, both of the school principals, and Superintendent F. H. Bair, all cordially approved the attempt and believed that it should be carried out systematically, with more time, throughout the language course. They believed, indeed, that the spelling period and the language period should be merged under a unified system, but one that would increase the effort on spelling rather than diminish it.

A third method of teaching spelling, that was carried out only in the junior high school but ought to be carried out in the lower grades, was keeping an individual list for every pupil of his special misspelled words. Individual time was provided to work on these misspellings until all of them could be mastered to the 100% point, through the use of special individual exercises. I will say something more about this third method at the end of this article.

In the present article I wish to concentrate attention particularly on the second of the special methods mentioned, namely the use of regular word-study lessons. Years ago in my "Word-Study for High Schools" I tried this method, but completely without success. I suspected that the reason was that I started too late, and more success might come from beginning with it in the lower grades. There has been a general agreement among teachers of spelling that rules do not help much in learning spelling, though Horn in his monograph says he wishes a test might be made of the use of rules where they would be carried to the point of complete habitual mastery. I myself am fully of the opinion that the conscious application of rules (except the rules for dropping final *e* and doubling a final consonant) helps spelling practically none at all. But out of a study of the principles underlying word-formation I evolved a plan for very rapid practice exercises that would be directly useful to the pupil in the study of spelling, but the chief object of which would be to sharpen the faculties for observation of sounds and of combinations of letters to represent these sounds.

Every teacher has doubtless observed that pupils are usually very deficient in the exact observation of the sounds that go to make up words. The old phonetic method of teaching reading emphasized drill upon fundamental sounds a great deal more than the more recent word-method of teaching reading. It seems to me that children need this drill for exact pronunciation for too often there is a haziness about the way they enunciate that ought to be cleared up. Many teachers of spelling have been aware that exact pronunciation ought to precede spelling.

Then, too, children need increased habits of observing the collocation of letters in words as they read. There can be no doubt that bright pupils learn to spell naturally from their habit of observing the spelling of words in the books they read, and pupils who read much are likely to be good spellers. Why shouldn't we make a direct effort to sharpen these faculties by special drills that would have this indirect result? I myself

am a complete believer in the indirect method of teaching language, and the development of habits of doing things right entirely unconsciously, as opposed to the method of logical criticism, which can function only after the thing has been produced by a spontaneous impulse. Why should we not make a definite effort to build up the faculties through which spelling is chiefly learned by those who become good spellers? This heightened ability will help equally in the spelling of all the words that are not to be found in the assigned spelling list—all the words that are not very commonly used but still ought to be correctly spelled. Recent research has led us to believe that the possible working vocabulary (that is, the vocabulary including the words that this pupil, or that, or the other may have occasion to use at some time or other in life) runs well over 10,000 words for even the average pupil, while only 3,000 or 4,000 words can be put into a spelling list that there will be time in school to study and master. What are we going to do to help pupils to learn to spell the 6,000 or 7,000 less common words which one or another of them will at some time have to write? I cannot see that at present we are doing anything, but I have hoped that my plan for sharpening the faculties of sound and letter observation would help in this direction.

Just what is this method? And how is it used in practice?

I first teach the difference between the long and the short sounds of the vowels, so that the ear of the pupil will instantly distinguish between those two sounds, beginning with *i*, I write on the board—

Short i

pin sit dim will dip

Long i

mile dime kite fire

I may say that I teach the long and short diacritical marks, but no others, as the dictionary runs into a complication of fine distinctions which I leave to be picked up unconsciously when the pupil comes to using the dictionary. The above illustrations are briefly preparatory to an exercise from the second and third grade spelling vocabulary. Pupils

are directed to make two columns, *Short* and *Long*, to copy those of the following words containing short *i* in the first column and those containing long *i* in the second giving each *i* the proper mark: ice, kill, kind, mine, miss, child, nice, nine, pick, pine, pink, find, sing, sister, hide, hill, wind, winter, bill, bit, bite, rise, rich, drive.

I call attention to the silent *e* at the end of most of the words that have long *i*. Copying these words in these two columns is a good way to study them, as pupils are forced to look at them carefully in order to copy them correctly, and to get them in the right column they must observe the sounds so as to decide which is long and which is short. A few words like *sister* and *winter* may be puzzling for a moment.

So each of the vowels is taken up in turn and its long and short sounds mastered. We learn the modified short sounds which the vowels have before *r*, and the special marks may be used, but pupils soon learn to recognize those special sounds by the *r* that follows, and no diacritical mark is needed. There is the Italian sound of *a*, which may be spoken of as the *ah* sound, and the broad *a*, spoken of as the *aw* sound. There are long and short double *o*, and the diphthongs *oi* (*oy*) and *ou* (*ou*).

When we have learned the regular ways of representing the vowels we come to the irregular substitutions: *ee* with the sound of long *e*, as in meet, see, deep, deer, week; and *ea* with the sound of long *e* as in meat, hear, read, seat, cream, meal. Pupils are then asked to copy the following words in two columns, *Regular* and *Irregular*, to mark the long and short vowels, and after each irregular word write in parentheses what is irregular, as—meat (*ea-e*): sleep, like, ate, bad, bell, keep, late, cake, cap, cold, near, neck, pen, ear, east, end, face, feed, feet, fell, felt, first, food, needs, place, room, rose, flat, free, green, sweet, such, teach.

We go on with similar exercises on *oa* with the sound of long *o*, *ea* with the sound of short *e*, *igh* with the sound of long *i*, and finally come to rather more difficult substitu-

tions such as *o* with the sound of short *u* in *son*, *done*, and *nothing*. So ten or a dozen outstanding irregular substitutions for regular ways of representing vowel sounds are taught, and placed in a reference list on the board, so that every spelling list for study may be rapidly and indirectly studied by copying the words in two columns, *Regular* and *Irregular*, and indicating the irregularities in parentheses. Words that contain two or more syllables may appear twice or three times, once for each syllable, with a line under the syllable to show what the listing is for.

Direct, conscious study of spelling often leads to confusion of mind, but this indirect method, where the attention is concentrated on something just a little to one side, cannot have bad results of that sort.

By this method, used only in the simple form indicated, the difference between regular and irregular word formations becomes thoroughly familiar, and all words that are spelled regularly may be left to an application of the principles of regular spelling, while efforts at memorizing can more and more be concentrated on the irregularities. Children are thus prevented from trying to spell unfamiliar words in analogy with irregular forms rather than on regular principles. Less common words ought to be spelled in accordance with regular principles, or else should be regularly derived from well known irregular roots. Above all the habit of discrimination in sounds and in ways of representing them by letters is developed, and it is this habit of discriminating observation that I hope may prove to be of most use to the pupil.

This simple work prepares the way in the fourth grade for efforts in the use of the dictionary. The sounds represented by the long and short markings of the vowels will be instantly recognized, and this will make easier the understanding of the more complicated forms, on which little insistence need be placed. Anything that is to become a permanent habit cannot possibly be allowed to become complicated. We badly need a very simple school dictionary. Until we do have

a simple dictionary, pupils can find their way about if they are thoroughly familiar with a few points which they can greet as old friends.

The fifth grade vocabulary seems admirably chosen to furnish plenty of illustrations of the formations of plurals and verbs—in short, all the common variations of endings and added syllables. It also affords opportunity for drill upon hard and soft sounds of *c* and *g*.

The sixth grade vocabulary is wonderfully rich in words with prefixes. The meanings of these prefixes, and the study of roots, is much too difficult for sixth grade children; but they can become deeply interested in merely recognizing the prefixes in the spelling of words, and getting help when consonants are doubled. For example, if the prefixes *dis*, *ap*, *com*, and *re* are familiar, the difficulty of double *m* in *command* and *commend*, of one *c* in *recommend*, one *s* and two *p*'s in *disappear* and *disappoint* will vanish. The secret of success lies in using these prefixes just as far as they will help the spelling, but no farther, and without calling on pupils to dissect and analyze.

Rules are given very simply. Then the pupils are asked to copy their spelling lists in two columns, to show the classification that may be the point of the day's lesson, or merely to state a reason why a given word has a double or a single consonant. In the course of four years the few simple rules become almost second nature with pupils, and should prove useful if the teacher does not try to teach the rules for their own sakes, or to carry the rules into complications. The method must be used only just to the point of habit-formation, and must not be carried farther. I think that over teaching is the mistake that has been made in the past.

There remains one exceedingly important phase of spelling that is not covered by methods so far outlined. That is the mastery of the demons. There are, I judge, about 250 of these, which appear in the full force of their demonology only in the upper grades. In lower grades pupils may misspell words

in many different ways, simply because they are just learning the art of spelling. Most of these accidental or chance misspellings, however, are of very little importance, for they will pass with time regardless of the teaching of spelling. The demons, on the other hand, due to some sort of confusion, are troublesome factors in the seventh and eighth grades unless the elementary teacher foresees them and heads them off. The truth is, many of them are the direct result of ill-balanced teaching in lower grades. Ashbaugh reports the word *to* as the most misspelled word in the junior high school. I have found it very little misspelled in lower grades, but *too* is quite generally misspelled, and in trying to correct this, teachers drive pupils to misspelling the much commoner *to* as *too*. The only possible way to teach such words is by discriminating between the two of them in their use in sentences. This discrimination of meaning is the very essence of composition, and only the composition teacher is likely to succeed in teaching them.

These 250 demons, distributed over the grades at the rate of about 50 to a grade I have worked into single letters for dictation, one letter to each grade, written in such a way as to cover all the review words (over 100) for that grade. These review letters are long, and may require several days to dictate, but they form about the only spelling test that can be had on words that are troublesome because of confusions of meaning. From this test each pupil can get his own individual list of difficulties. He should then be set to individual drill in the form of filling in the correct word in sentences, where the two forms likely to be confused must be discriminated.

Two homonyms taught side by side may easily confuse pupils who formerly had no trouble with the words. When a pupil unconsciously spells a word right it is exceedingly dangerous to make him study that word consciously, for the only thing he can possibly learn is to misspell it, and many pupils do learn just this. But when on test the teacher knows positively that he does confuse two such words, the only thing to do is to

attack the two of them head on, side by side, until the difference between them can be mastered. This requires long and tedious pounding, and unless the teacher keeps at it

till the pupil's confusion is really cleared up, it is wasted effort. Much teaching on these discriminations is never carried far enough, in my best judgment.

GREAT POSSESSIONS

(Continued from page 165)

soms in the higher mountains were in their prime and well repaid us for so long a trip.

If the cottages of Quebec and Cape Cod are quaint, the log cabins of Southern Appalachia are picturesque. They seem so suited to the land; they fairly snuggle into the hollows and belong to them as do the trees. Then too they appeal to one because they are the same sort of homes that all the pioneers had. They belong to our social and historical heritage. We saw everything that we had planned to see except the razor-backs, but the Smith-Hughes teacher at Lincoln Memorial University said he could take us three miles from the main road and show us plenty of them. One of the chief aims of the Smith-Hughes men is to improve the stock, so naturally this one was glad that no stray razor-back had wandered across our path. There isn't space to tell about the wonderful week we spent in these mountains. Prof. Raine of Berea has written a delightful book, *LAND OF SADDLE BAGS*, in which he sympathetically describes the life of the mountaineers.

On the trip home we came through beautiful Shenandoah Valley and then visited Virginia battle fields, Mt. Vernon, Washington, and Gettysburg. For a child beginning the study of American history it was a wonderful experience.

This year during Easter vacation we drove South to Memphis. Our chief desire was to see the red-buds in bloom. Friends were going to Washington to see the Japanese cherries, but we wished first to see the glory

of our native trees. Our route took us through Urbana where we stopped for a day. On our friends' table we saw a copy of Carl Sandburg's *ABRAHAM LINCOLN, THE PRAIRIE YEARS*. Our host reminded us that we were in Lincoln country and also Sandburg country. As we drove South at twilight over the flat prairie we were grateful to Sandburg because much reading aloud of his *ROOT-BAGA STORIES* had given us a little of his feeling for the beauty of the prairies—even the silhouettes of grain elevators seemed magically transformed into the cliffs of fairy-land.

Excited as we all were over cotton fields, gins, levees, and negro cabins, the greatest interest of this trip was that so much of the time we were in places associated with the name of Lincoln—Hodgensville, Elizabethtown, the Ohio River, Illinois. When we returned we read Sandburg's *LINCOLN* and marveled at his remarkable description of pioneer life. The glamour of his prose held us and we felt enriched by having this book to supplement our trip.

We are contemplating other journeys. There is Washington and its cherry blossoms. The Ozarks, with many fords through mountain streams, are calling. We must see the rare old iron gates in a certain street of Charleston, South Carolina. New Orleans with its Spanish influence tempts us. When we have visited all these—who knows?—perhaps we'll begin to hunt native orchids—a quest that takes a life-time.

EDITORIALS

IN TIMES OF REST, PREPARE FOR SCHOOL

TOO many teachers know little of the actual needs of the children in their care because they are occupied in preparing the materials of instruction for daily classroom use. The bulk of material from which the teacher must make selection, is so vast that much of the time she spends in preparation must necessarily be given over to winnowing, and searching out material.

Her preparation must include the selection and reading of children's literature, particularly recent books, the planning of composition, oral and written, and the securing of tests and practice exercises for diagnostic and remedial training, in reading, spelling, composition, and the mechanics of writing.

THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW is a source from which the teacher preparing materials and making plans can draw with sure results.

The following references to articles in THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW are given merely as a sample of the material available in back numbers.

The December number of THE REVIEW, for each year, beginning with December, 1924, contains an alphabetical index which may be consulted conveniently.

Most of the titles given here are from the present volume, because the index of this volume has not yet appeared. The list here is not exhaustive. It is suggestive, and representative of the material appearing in other volumes for previous years.

A Classification of Some Helpful Articles Reading

Silent:

Hygienic Standards in Type and Format of Reading Materials—J. Herbert Blackhurst. April, 1928

Use of Research in the Teaching of Reading—H. L. Donovan. April, 1928

Analysis of Skills in Reading—Leo J. Brueckner. April 1, 1928

Oral

The Case for Oral Reading—Franklin T. Baker. May, 1928

Speech Correction as a School Problem—Alice C. Chapin. May, 1928

Remedial

Remedial Work in Reading—W. J. Osburn. April and May, 1928

Books

Recent Fiction for Girls—Ruth Wilkinson Weeden. January, 1928

Recent Fiction for Boys—Helen Martin. February, 1928

Composition

A Scale for Judging Oral Composition—Sydney Harring. March, 1928

Recent Developments in Standards for Elementary Composition—Ida A. Jewett. March, 1928

Some Limitations to be Recognized—Thomas C. Blaisdell. March, 1928

Dangers of Emphasizing Form Rather than Thought—Ezra Lehman. March, 1928

Deflating the Elementary Course in Composition—Sterling A. Leonard. March, 1928

Tests

Mechanics of Writing

A Test for Habits in English—Frank L. Clapp. February, 1926

A Practical Testing Program for the New School Year—C. C. Certain. September, 1926

Follow-up in English Form—Sterling Andrus Leonard. September, 1926

A Simplified Essentials Test—Maurice W. Moe. December, 1926

Literature

Objective Tests in Eighth Grade Literature—M. Eleanor Evans. January, 1928

Shall We Test in Literature? Ruth Moscrip. May, 1928

Spelling

Transfer of Training in Spelling—Clifford Archer. February, 1928

Adult Patterns for Children's Clothes—Frederick S. Breed. February, 1928

CHILDREN'S CHOICES OF POEMS

(Continued from page 186)

Poem	Grade	Index Value
1. Half-way Down	2	57.8
2. Miss T	2	48.6
3. The Table and the Chair	2	45.8
4. Growing Up	3	43.0
5. The Owl and the Pussy Cat	1	43.0
6. The Pobble Who has no Toes	3	42.8
7. The Flag	3	33.9
8. The Lost Shoes	1	30.6
9. Three Little Kittens	1	29.2
10. Brownie	1	28.9
11. Washington's Birthday	3	27.4

The one outstanding and conclusive fact which the writer feels is brought out by this study is this: The conventional type of children's poetry usually found in even the better series of school readers is not enjoyed by the children themselves so well as other poems which may be found in the better anthologies of child verse.

The study should be suggestive to curriculum makers and to writers of children's text-book series in reading. It is clear that our adult ideas of what is good poetry for children coincide too seldom with the judgment of children in the matter. The reason for this discrepancy probably lies in the fact that as adults our attitude toward such a poem is one of reminiscence, tinged with a sort of

philosophical interpretation. The child does not see the poem through the eyes of adult experience and consequently the poem does not mean to him what it does to the adult.

A few teacher reactions from some who aided in the study will show how participation in the experiment influenced them:

"It has been a delightful experience to go over these poems as a whole with the children, and profitable to the children and myself to determine which poems give most pleasure to the child. It seems well to stray from the beaten path and to do that which creates most pleasure and enthusiasm for the child."

"My children enjoyed the poems a great deal, but I believe 'The Owl and the Pussy Cat' was liked best. Their experience in playing with their kittens added much to the humor of it. Some of the little children wanted to try to say it."

"'The Pobble Who Has No Toes' and 'Growing Up' especially appealed to the third grade, with 'Washington's Birthday' running next in popularity. The first two have been asked for several times since."

TEACHING CHILDREN TO MEMORIZE

A POEM

(Continued from page 181)

Applications of Principles Summarized

The children's interpretation of a poem depends, in part, upon their viewing it as a series of thoughts and pictures. This necessitates a thoughtful survey of the whole poem, then of the large divisions, and finally of the new whole. Adherence to this procedure leads

pupils to become conscious of the fact that this method is satisfactory from the standpoint of appreciation and understanding, and economical from the standpoint of time needed for memorization. Thus, the learning of a poem enriches experience and at the same time gives control of a method of independent study.